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SUBJECT: COLOMBIA ON SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS PREPARATIONS

REF: STATE 158875

Classified By: Political Counselor Jeffrey DeLaurentis
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. The United States can "count on Colombia's support" at the Summit of the Americas if such support is "crucial," according to the MFA, but Colombia hopes to avoid being in the middle of disputes, especially with Venezuela, unless absolutely necessary. The GOC asked for support for its "democratic security" agenda and suggested a meeting between MFA Vice Minister Camilo Reyes and Ambassador Maisto September 7-9 in Buenos Aires. End Summary.

2. (U) Poloffs made Ref A demarche to MFA Director for the Summit of the Americas Francisco Gonzalez on August 29, stressing U.S. commitment to a successful Summit but noting concerns about the unfocused nature of the draft Declaration and the pace of negotiations. Poloffs encouraged the MFA to consider a simple leaders' statement in the event that a consensus Declaration cannot be finished before the November Summit.

3. (C) Gonzalez noted that the GOC and the U.S. were in accord on most issues, including that a private-sector led, free market economy is the foundation for prosperity and social development. However, he noted that the U.S. should not expect a lot of comment from Colombia during the Summit on U.S. economic priorities. "But, we won't get in your way," he said.

4. (C) According to Gonzalez, the GOC intends to be aggressive on only one issue: "democratic security." For Colombia, he said, there can be no economic growth and no progress on social development goals without security. The GOC would appreciate U.S. support on security issues.

5. (C) In general, Gonzalez said that the U.S. "could count on GOC support" at the Summit, but was quick to note that the GOC would not get into the middle of any debate between the U.S. and Venezuela and Argentina unless it "were necessary." Gonzalez said the GOC does not want problems with Venezuela, but promised GOC backing if it were "crucial" or if the US "badly needed" assistance.

6. (C) While Gonzalez did not leap at the opportunity to provide input for a leaders' declaration on shared goals, he noted that Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Camilo Reyes will attend the September 7-9 meeting in Buenos Aires and would welcome the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Maisto.

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